Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News

... Newsletter of the Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport Owners Group

November/December 1997

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Moto Musing

Gino Pokluda

Winterize

As I write this column, sleet pelts the windows of our house. Old Man Winter has come knocking and it's time to winterize. For many riders, this would signal the end of the riding season, but here in the central mountains of New Mexico, you can ride all year if you like as long as you prepare yourself and your bike(s). I personally would go insane if I had to lock up my bikes for the winter since two-wheeled transportation is my preferred mode, even in winter.

However, I can remember a time when I was not prepared for the New Mexico winters and I spent a miserable winter on my trusty Yamaha 650 Seca. It seemed no matter how many layers I was able to pile on my body; the cold air would quickly leach the heat out of me even in what I now consider balmy mid-thirty degree temperatures. Within thirty minutes, I would be shivering uncontrollably; my fingers would be in pain, and my muscles tense. I knew that this was not a condition to be in while riding a motorcycle. Since then, after much experimentation, I now have, what I believe to be a very good system of preparedness for cold weather riding which will allow me to ride in temperatures well below freezing and still remain comfortable and in control.

One thing I have learned when it comes to riding gear is that there is no substitute for quality products designed specifically for motorcycling. I learned long ago that fashion should never take priority over function, especially when cold weather gear is concerned. I wear a First Gear Kiliminjaro HT Jacket and matching pants. The jacket is versatile enough to wear both in the dead of winter and heat of summer thanks to some well placed vents and a comfy Polartec liner which can double as a

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...Moto Musing

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light jacket by itself. Underneath the jacket, I wear a Widder electric vest when temperatures dip below 40 degrees or so. I use a manual on/ off switch that comes standard with the vest. I have tried the optional thermostat, but could never get it adjusted to where I was happy with it. Widder electric gloves take care of keeping the hands toasty, and insulated work boots keep my feet happy and warm. We lose a great deal of body heat through our heads, which is the area most, neglected by winter riders. For temps elow forty, I use a Head Silk and an Aerostich wind triangle. When temperatures dip below freezing, I use a polypropylene balaclava under my helmet.

Don't forget to winterize your bike, either. Anti-freeze should be swapped out every two years, run the appropriate viscosity oil, and keep the battery charged. Remember that even the smallest amount of anti-freeze is toxic to animals, which love its sweet taste and like oil, can be recycled. Your tires will need air since the hot air you put in during the summer is now colder and denser. While on the subject of tires, be sure to given them plenty of time to reach operating temperature before trying to scrape foot pegs.

Finally, I always keep a flashlight, extra batteries and bulb in my jacket since I ride at night during the short days of winter. For those like me who end up commuting in the dark morning and evening hours, a reflective vest is also a good item to wear. I have never had luck with those anti-fogging sprays and creams, but I do know that a clean face shield will be less likely to fog than a dirty one, so I clean my face shield two or three times a week.

Winter riding can be a very rewarding experience if you are prepared. If you are not prepared, it can be the most miserable time on a motorcycle imaginable. So, be prepared, be warm, be safe.

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Modifying the Great White Whale
or
Finding Happiness with Your KLR650

Mike Sisson

These days we have an impressive array of dual-sport bikes to choose from. They range from the standard Japanese flagships, to the exotic (Expensive!) European and now American brands. With these newer bikes the pendulum has swung back towards off road capability, sometimes to the extreme. This has resulted In 'Dual- Sport' bikes that have lost the ability to traverse any reasonable expanse of pavement with anything resembling comfort. Many are street legal but not street capable. Don't get me wrong!! People who ride principally off road with only the occasional pavement diversion have got it made with these off road wonders. Unfortunately, like a lot of folks, I need at least 6 or 7 different motorcycles, however my budget dictates owning but one. I needed a motorcycle that was truly Dual-Sport capable. For me, that proved to be Kawasaki's KLR 650.

This article is not to convince you to buy a KLR 650. Either it appeals to you or it doesn't. The fact is it's rather porky for serious (read fast) off road travel. Topped with it's OPEC grade fuel cell and the woefully under sprung/ damped suspension, hard charges off-road are a mostly suicidal proposition. If you need to go fast off-road, stop reading. No amount of affordable modification is going to substantially change the nature of The Whale. However, given the right modifications, the KLR 650 is about the best, most affordable machine available for the casual long distance back-road explorer/ tourer. It has a user friendly, low key approach that keeps me smiling every time we

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UPDATES

KLR650's in Law Enforcement

Subscriber, David Minor has brought to my attention that KLR650s are being used by the Farmington, New Mexico, Sheriff's Department for law enforcement. I immediately called Doug of Doug's Kawasaki in Farmington to find out more about this new role for the big DP machine, only to find out that they are used in Colorado Springs, San Diego and Nevada. I hope to have more details in the next issue.

Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News Homepage

Thanks to a great deal of hard work by Bill Haycock, we now have a fully functional homepage. Disregard the URL in the last issue and bookmark www.geocities.com/ ~klrdsn . You will find links to many interesting sites as well as plenty of info about after market products for the Kawasaki 650 dual

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sport machine, want ads, best rides, pictures and more. When you visit, be sure to e-mail Bill and tell him what a great job he has done.

Cover Photo

This issue's cover photo is of Steve M. Jones' street going KLR650. Steve was a little light on description, but from careful examination of his photograph, I can tell you that Steve has done some trick stuff to his KLR. For starters, it has a revamped saddle that looks like it came from Sargent Cycle and an Acerbis low front fender. The front wheel looks like it could be laced with a smaller rim but I'm not sure. The bike is wearing street tires front and back and the remote reservoir for a new shock can be seen peeking out next to the battery. Taller aluminum handle bars with bar-end weights top off the package from what I can tell.

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.... Great White Whale

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probe a new corner of the state. The monstrous 6 gal tank ensures you can travel just about any back road or trail with no fear of running out of gas. Given reasonable and regular maintenance, the big water cooled, under stressed, overbuilt engine will probably outlast the pyramids. A BIG selling point is the ability to retrofit a kick-starter. I do not consider it wise to take any bike out into the boonies with total reliance on a battery to get me started. Some might comment that you can bump start the thing, but bump starting a four hundred pound motorcycle in deep sand or a mud bog can only be described as fantasy. The KLR's price new remains reasonable by today's standards and older used models (a rare find as most KLR owners are happy with their bikes) can occasionally be had for as low as **$1500.**

One of the first items replaced was the footpegs. The factory rubber units are fine for the street, but off road stand-up riding when wet almost guarantees a spectacular crash and burn. After numerous false leads I called David at Thumper Racing. He modified the stock peg mounts to accept a set of DR350 'Burly Pegs'. These meaty cleated pegs are perfect for off road and wet conditions. Some of the vibration dampening had been lost with the switch over from rubber to metal. Mounting a thrice-folded piece of old inner tube between the frame and peg mounts restored this. At this time a liberal amount of thread lock was placed on the peg bolts. This brings me to another item. It is essential to use thread-lock on just about every screw, bolt, and nut you can find. I found several radiator shroud screws and bolts missing on my inaugural 60-mile ride home from the dealer. While the rider is fairly well guarded from vibration (for a big single), the KLR spits off fasteners reminiscent of the old British singles. Thread-lock often and liberally!! One of the most notable areas of vibration is the handlebar. By popping off (actually it involved a of scraping and swearing) the hand grips and then applying a cheap silicone caulk to the interior of the bar, most of the irritating high frequency vibration was eliminated. The grips were replaced with Renthal's medium compound that is a lot easier on the hands and provides a better grip off road. A set of Lever-skins was also added, which give a more comfortable pull on the clutch/ brake levers. Another early victim of vibration was the tail light lens. It fractured at the point where the mounting screws enter. Remove the screws and add small rubber o-rings to each screw. Add thread lock to the screws and tighten it gently. Over tightening is guaranteed to crack the thing. Not good at $15 a pop.

Front forks were improved with a set of Progressive Springs. Installation is straight forward and consists of loosening the upper triple clamp bolts, removing the fork caps, sawing down the spacers, and reinstalling the new springs. I opted to keep a bit more length (5mm) on the spacers than called for. This gives me a bit more pre-load and a little less sag. As I weigh about 220 Lbs. (not all muscle!) with gear, this worked out well for me. I use 15w Spectro Fork Oil but again, this is what has worked out best for me. The front end retains its smooth response to small bumps but has lost most of the vague input and frequent bottoming that plagues the stock set up. Experiment with different weights and volumes of fork oil to get the response you desire. A set of Acerbis Fork / Brake protectors keeps the goo off the front brake and protects the lower fork legs from rock chips. Depending on your budget, fork revalving is available through several companies and is probably well worth the price. The rea shock continues to wait revamping (much needed) until my budget allows.

The bike comes with a cheesy plastic bash plate that looks good and will work well so long as rocks, stumps, craters, branches, bumps, or Bambi are never encountered on your off-road sojourns. Fortunately, White Brothers make a substantial solid aluminum bash plate that looks capable of stopping assault weapon's fire. Probably voiding the warranty (if any), I drilled several holes in a stylish and provocative pattern to facilitate heat as well as water/mud dissipation. Moose makes a similar pre-drilled product but it proved more difficult to mount when we placed it on my Dad's KLR. Remember to thread-lock the bolts!! Lockhart supplied a substantial headlight guard that not only looks cool; it protects the headlight lens from roost impact when those wily KTM or ATK guys go blowing around you. And they will. (Don't worry. They'll be begging for gas someday !!) Lockhart also makes a headlight bulb replacement that supplies 100 watts on high beam which is a godsend if you end up out in the boonies after dark. It's also good for vaporizing the eyes of that dweeb in the oncoming

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... Great White Whale

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mini-van who won't dim his lights. The large stock hand guards do a great job keeping wind and flying gravel off your hands but are almost worthless as protection in a crash or an encounter with a tree. Acerbis Rally guards bolt right on (No Kidding!!) and provide this protection. The available spoilers were added to improve wind/ roost protection.

The kickstand starter lockout is one of those worthless lawyer mandated gizmos, and has a reputation for sometimes causing weird electrical shorts and intermittent missing. Removal can be accomplished by simply removing the unit and connecting the two wires on the remaining plug together. Job completed. Just remember to put the kickstand up before taking off lest your Dork-like actions justify the lawyer's concerns.

The rear shock is unprotected from rocks, mud, sand, and slime spewing off the rear tire. This is a great way to facilitate the need for a new rear shock prematurely. (Actually, not a bad idea!) Acerbis makes the 'Air Box Mud Flap' that fits almost perfectly for this application, mounting on the partial fender extension already in place. One must remove the rear wheel for this operation to get the drill into the fender well. Be careful not to bore into your nearby air filter box. Do this early on to prevent early shock leakage/ failure. I also opted to add a splash guard to the trailing edge of the front fender, again using the Acerbis unit, this time trimmed down a bit. This keeps a substantial amount of mud and goo off the engine and has made no noticeable change in the engine operating temperature at either high or low speed.

As I feel reliability is more important than total horsepower, I have done little to the engine. I did add vents to the air box to improve breathing. A K&N air filter also facilitated this. After a lot of deliberation, I opted for the

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COBRA ISDE pipe. While still a bit louder than I like, it has a fairly mellow tone that is not too obtrusive for off road / dual sport events. This can be further improved by adding fiberglass muffler packing. Be prepared to repack every 5-600 miles. It is unfortunately still too loud around town or the suburbs and I continue to switch to the stock pipe (a 10 minute job If you buy an extra header pipe gasket for the new pipe) for my normal street riding sojourns. (Hint WAKE UP PIPE MANUFACTURERS!!! MAKE SOME QUIET EXHAUST SYSTEMS! !) The Cobra does have a 7 lb. wt advantage over the stock unit. With these additions the bike needed a jetting change. I went with the Dynajet kit. The carbueration is now considerably crisper with a vastly improved low range response as well as the elimination of an irritating surge at highway speeds. I do not notice any real change in total horsepower.

The seat has proven to be well shaped but terribly inadequate as far as the density of the foam. After a day's ride it has the consistency of warm marshmallows and offers similar support. The only advantage at this point is

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If you would like to submit a cover photo, please send one in with a brief description of the picture. If you would like it back, please include a self-addressed and stamped, envelop with it.

Directory

I have received many calls from folks asking why they are not in the directory. I will only include your name in the directory if you tell me to by phone, e-mail or snail-mail. If you would like to be included in the next K650DSN directory, please send your name, address, phone and e-mail address. The next directory will be in the January/ February issue.

KLR650 in Rider Magazine

There I was, thumbing through the November issue of Rider, and watching Austin City Limits on the tube when my eye caught some pictures of a KLR650. Sure enough the Ridden and Rated column was about the

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venerable beast and thumper we have all come to love. As usual, the article was low on any real meaty info and high on generalizations. For the most part, they seemed to love the bike.

Subscription Renewals

If your mailing label has **RENEW** in the upper right corner, you'd better pay your subscription dues if you don't want to miss out on the next issue!

White Power Forks from Dual Star

Mike Walburn has purchased a large number of White Power, upside forks and has them for sale at a very good price. These forks come complete with triple clamps and hardware, but are by no means a bolt on application for the KLR650 or Tengai. The very low price (which you will have to call Mike to get) however, should take some of the sting out of attempting to upgrade the front end

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... Great White Whale

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that usually your butt is so numb it really doesn't matter anymore. I tried a Corbin saddle but found it too short and too wide in the forward section making stand up riding very difficult. Because it is so low in the front, there is little room for seat foam between the pan and your derriere. Corbin deals with this by using outrageously hard foam, which I find more uncomfortable than the stock seat. They recommended a 2000 mile break in, which succeeded only in giving me a sore bun. As Corbin's saddle is designed to lower the seat height, this can be a boon for the shorter rider. I only found it irritating as I have long legs and happen to like the stock seating position. My final answer was to send the stock seat to Sargent Cycle Upholstery in Florida. They replaced the upper 2 inches of foam with a dense, closed-cell foam while retaining the stock cover. This succeeded in firming up the long ride squishies and made the seat quite comfortable for the long haul.

KLR's are famous for notchy shifting which contributes to missed shifts and a wandering neutral that can be maddening to find. This situation can be improved by changing the wimpy stock shift lever to the longer, more solid unit available through IMS. By being considerably more rigid than the OEM unit, It provides a much better input. Being longer it allows more room for shifting when using heavy off-road boots.

One of the most confusing aspects about any Dual Sport bike is that of tires. While compounds and treads have improved, there is still no ideal solution to the problem of an off/ on road tire. If you ride principally off road the decision is easy with several companies producing aggressive knobby tires with DOT approval. If however, you use your DS bike as it was intended, the waters muddy considerably. This decision is entirely personal and based on the type of riding you do the most. The fact is NO dual-sport tire is going to hook up very well in dirt when compared with a knobby. Add mud and goo to the equation and you're going to have a mighty exciting' time. Ride accordingly. My personal experience has been that the stock tires are the best all around compromise in terms of wear and traction both on and off road. The only problem being that the K75 Dunlops are available only through Kawasaki dealers and are thus prohibitive in cost when compared with after market rubber. The Dunlop Trailmax or IC GP110's are good alternatives. One helpful solution is the addition of rim locks both front and rear. This enables the rider to air down when hitting the dirt and thereby improve the tires off road performance. Airing down without the locks can allow the tires to spin on the rims and tear the tube stems out. This often makes for a bad day. The negative side to rim-locks is the increased difficulty of tire removal when fixing a flat on the trail. When pavement is again encountered and the tires need to be aired up, the Moto-Pump tire pressure tool with extra C02 canisters is the ideal solution. This nifty gadget allows you to regulate how much of the C02 is used and saves the remainder for later use. Another satisfactory but expensive solution is to find a set of used wheels and mount a separate set of Ores for off road / dual sport events. This also allows one to go up a few teeth on the back sprocket when off road; thereby lowering the gearing and making slow speed travel a bit easier.

When riding any DS bike, both off and on road, a few items can be helpful. A trick learned from motocrossing is to wear a set of Lycra bicycle shorts under your pants. This gives support and keeps your butt from going numb early. A handy/ necessary accessory is an enduro type fanny pack. Load some tools, tape, Zagnut's, Advil, matches, cotter pins, chain lube, master link, tire repair kit, and tire irons. I also carry the aforementioned Moto-Pump tire pressure tool with 5-6 spare cartridges. DO NOT rely on C02 cartridges exclusively. Carry a small mountain bike tire pump as a back up. It can take 3 of those cute little cartridges to air up a back tire..... and a LOT more if you pinched the tube. It's a bad feeling to be a long way from home and hear your last C02 canister hiss into the atmosphere. A STRONG word of advice: Try removing your wheels and tires with the tools you normally carry riding. It's far easier to learn of a deficiency in your garage than 42 miles from

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.... Great White Whale

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nowhere. The more you ride the more you'll individualize the 'necessities' in your fanny pack. Most have the capacity to carry canteens which are a must for long back road / off road rides. Do NOT buy a cheap one! It will ultimately cost you a lot more in lost tools, equipment, and a good replacement pack when it bursts open on some trail and spews all your gear over a 3 county area. I speak from experience here. Another important addition to your fanny pack should be spare levers. These can be purchased through Lockhart at considerable savings over the stock units. A spare tube can be carried in the nifty front fender bag available from Cyco Active products. As the KLR does not have a center stand, a necessity for trailside tire repair is the collapsible side stand from Motion-Pro. This simple but clever gadget is inserted under the frame opposite the side stand and gives you a 'center stand' with which to make tire repairs. Without this, you'll either have to lay the bike down (Which means eventually picking it up !!??!) or find some rocks or wood to prop the beast up to remove the wheel. For general at home maintenance/ repair, one of the aftermarket lever type stands is a must for wheel or fork removal. It also makes chain lubing /cleaning an easier task. Milk crates will not work. The price of the stand is well worth it when compared with even a cut-rate hernia operation. Even if you're big or tough enough to lift the beast onto a milk crate, it promptly mashes the crate and settles with a contented sigh back onto terra firma.

As I noted earlier, the above modifications have all taken approx. 2 years to complete. They have all made the Whale a little easier and more fun to ride. There is also the satisfaction of crawling around on the beast and getting to know every nook and cranny as parts were added or removed.

Cyco Active Products. Front Fender Bag (206) 323-2 349

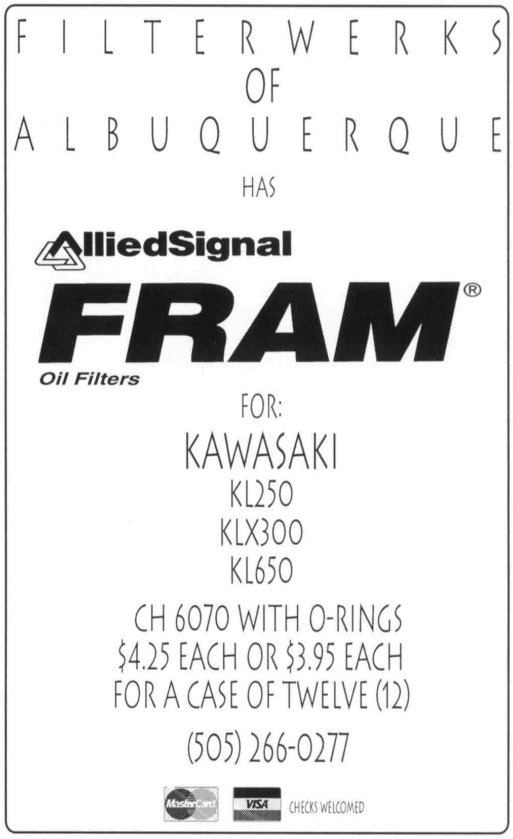
Cycle Gear 1-800-292-5343 Note: Lockhart, Acerbis, White Brothers, Moto-Pump, Moose and Malcolm Smith products available.

Thumper Racing David now sells the modified pegs with Burly pegs pre-mounted (903)938-0570

Chaparral: Cobra, Lockhart, Acerbis, White Brothers, and Malcolm
(800) 841-2960 Smith products available.

Sargent Cycle Upholstery Seat foam replacement (800) 749- SEAT

If you would like more information on the mods that Mike Sisson has made, he can be contacted at PO Box 542, Pinole, Ca. 94564, 707-446-5966



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of the KLR or any other dual sport for that matter.
Another great tidbit of information is that by the time you read this, Mike will be shipping out orders for his long awaited center stands for the KLR650/Tengai.
When I spoke with Mike last, he had received all of the pieces, had the stands welded and was sending them to be powder coated.
Dual Star 206-776-7433

MORE HELP!

Now that we have our home page under control, I'm looking for more help. I am asking for volunteers to become State Coordinators for the Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport Owners Group. By volunteering, you will be the point of contact for that State's membership. I will still take care of subscriptions and such, but would rely on you to coordinate rides and be host to members passing through. If you are

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interested, please call, write or e-mail me. I hope to have a directory of state coordinators by this summer.

Quality Engine R&D
Steve Kesselring is almost set up at his new shop and has already started making some of his excellent lowering links for the KLR650. For those who have just started with the K650DSO, the lowering links allow you to easily lower a KLR650 1.5 inches. If you would like a set or more information give Steve a call at **334-677-1708.**

IMPORTANT DATES

2nd Annual Utah Get-Together will be in Moab, Utah on **April 24-25 1998.**

HSTA Star Rally will be in Taos, NM in **June of 1998.** K650DSO will be hosting dual sport rides at the HSTA event.

Four Stroke Singles National Owners Club will have their

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Highway Pegs for KLR650

Text and photos by Jake Jakeman

When Gino first told me about cruiser pegs for the KLR, like the little kid in the cereal commercial, I was skeptical. I have pegs on the case guards of my road sled, but on a DP bike? Huh? One of my favorite outdoor writers, Jack O'Connor, once penned an appropriate description: "like growing wings on a jackass - you may get 'em to grow, but it'll never fly".

But wait, there's more...

Yeah, Gino, okay, I'll try 'em.. (under my breath: "but I won't like 'em").. I'll rise, but I will not shine. I open the box: Hmm, not homely enough for a real dirt bakk, but wutt the hail, owl put 'em awn.

They went on real easy; I replaced the stock engine mounting bolts with a longer pair of 5/16th diameter, and Nylok nuts. They don't look out of place, and when the pegs are folded back, they look as if they wouldn't interfere with the way I ride. I ride my 10-speed a lot out here on the desert; when I ride the KLR long distances in the cold, I get hamstring cramps. I've often yearned for a way to stretch out my leg muscles on long stretches of interstate.

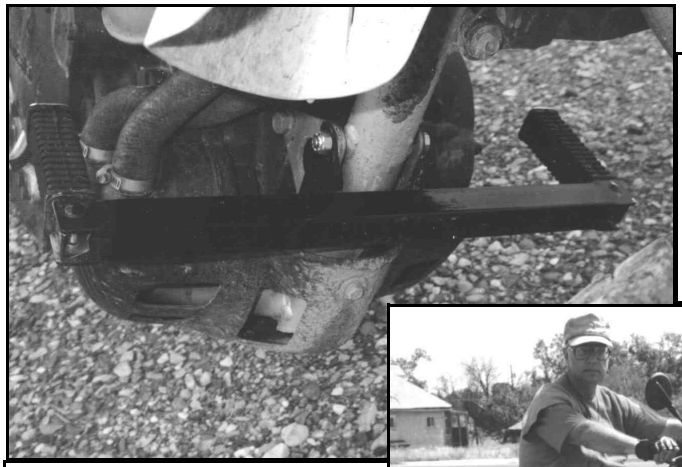
I had the opportunity to use the pegs on several rides over to Escalante this summer; sure is neat to change my foot position around. I used them the most on flat, open running, where I didn't have to use the shifter or the rear brake, you would want to fold 'em back and stay on the stock pegs in traffic or in the canyons.

I cannot find a single thing to criticize about the fit, finish, or foot position. If you're tall enough to straddle a DP bike, you'll find they're located just about right.

Each and every bolt-on available for my bike is attracted by the force of gravity; this one has earned a permanent home on my downtube. To summarize:

NO MORE CALLS,
WE HAVE A WINNER!

Source:Drive Line Service in Boise Idaho; Tim Bernard is the POC. Their phone no. is (208) 377-8770; FaxNo: (208) 377-8772. If you've seen his excellent bag racks, you'll recognize the form, fit and workmanship: not round and swoopy, bullet-bike looking stuff, but angular and tough and functional, like my faithful old KLR.



LEFT: *Highway pegs use existing motor mount bolt holes and tuck neatly away when not in use. They also provide a great place to tie off your tank panniers.*

RIGHT: Jake looking suspisciously like Peter Fonda. Leg position looks comfy and folded pegs are not much wider than the radiator cowls.

Utah Travel Information

Jake Jakeman

Here is some information for readers who plan to visit the Southern Utah/Four Corners area. The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is our nation's newest, the largest in the contiguous 48 states, and is the only one administered by the BLM. It contains some of the most remote and peaceful terrain accessible by primitive roads.

There are several vegetative zones within the monument boundaries, as well as Native American ruins and rock art. State Road 12, a scenic byway that runs between Escalante and Torrey, over Boulder Mountain, is a real feast for bikers, both for the scenery offered, and the curvy path it takes. Depending on the route taken from Moab, you'll pass several national parks and other attractions on the way there; those readers who are able to spend a few days before or after the rally touring and exploring the area would be refreshed and invigorated by a visit to Grand Staircase.

Readers may contact the Escalante BLM Field Office @ (435) 826-5499 to request an infopacket; they aso **have established a web@page: http://www.blmgov/utah/monument** Additional information regarding lodging, provisions, and other activities can be obtained from (435) 826-4810: Point of Contact is Harriet Priska, write to PoBox 175, Escalante UT 84726. She has also established a website: www.escalante-cc.com

Carl's Corner

Technical Insights by Elden Carl

I'm a 62 year old retired guy who started riding motorcycles in 1955. I've done some road racing and lots of off-road and enduro riding. I've been maintaining and building motorcycles for more years than I'd like to admit, but building a couple of the first long-travel C&J Hondas with Curnutt shocks in the early 1970's was a great education.

My teachers were two legends in the business, Jeff Cole of C&J Precision Products and Charlie Curnutt, the father of long travel suspension. The knowledge I gained from Jeff and Charlie and other pros in the business has made it possible for me to turn my KLR650 into the best all-around motorcycle I've ever owned.

I've logged approximately 97,000 miles on five different KLR650s. My 1993 has over 54,000 miles on the odometer and my 1995 is at 10,500 miles. The '95 is set up with a bias toward the dirt and the '93 is more street oriented. The following is a rundown on the changes I've made to my KLR650s.

All of my front wheels have 1.85 Takasago 21" rims and the rear wheels are stock except for one hub which is laced to a 2.50 18" Takasago XL rim from Buchanan's. All wheels are laced with Buchanan stainless steel spokes and nipples (no more loose and tarnished spokes). **Buchanan's** can be reached at **818-969-4655**.

The front forks have hard anodized and Teflon coated lowers. The lowers are from a Tengai with the fork tubes and internals from a KLR. The front brake caliper is, of course, also from a Tengai with a **Braking System's (619-239-0477)** front disc and pads. Front fork dampening is modified for a smoother more balanced action. Fluid and dampening modifications are by **Pettersson Pro Suspensions (714-630-4777)** and **Tom Moen (619-670-3690)**. The final touch for the front forks are special longer fork caps which allow the forks to be slid down in the triple clamps to provide more rake and trail for off-road riding. The extended caps are made by **Eagle Manufacturing (619-479-0123)**.

Steering bearings are set on the tight side to reduce "wag" and the steering head has a zirk grease fitting installed.

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(Continued from page 7)

national rally in Red River, New Mexico on **September 8-9, 1998.**

BMW Owners National Rally will be in Missoula, Montana on **July 9-12, 1998**

Al Jesse Tools Up

In the last issue of K650DSN, I noted that Al Jesse would be producing his excellent aluminum panniers for the KLR650. Well, the time has come. Member, Jim Hickerson, entrusted his KLR to Al who is now in the process of making 10 sets of aluminum panniers. If you are interested in the design of the cases, need more info, or would like to purchase a set of these fine panniers, call Al at 712-732-2234

Big Paw Closing Shop

A few issues ago, I told you about Big Paw Mountainworks, a small company that produces outdoor gear, especially quality fleece wear.

(Continued on page 11)

...Elden's Corner

(Continued from page 8)

The front axle is shimmed to eliminate fork binding. Mine took two .025" shims to do the job (Kawasaki part number 92025-1135).

The plastic panel behind the headlight is spaced back and the plastic strip removed to prevent buzzing and wear to the fairing. Handlebars are Jimmy Button Renthals. The front master cylinder, clutch and brake levers, brush guards and all other control pieces are Suzuki DR350. The mirrors are from a Honda XR650L.

Remote reservoir Ohlins gas shocks control the rear wheels. Both are "one-offs" built to my specifications. Stig Pettersson built one, while the other was assembled by the late Bob Elliot of **Noleen Racing (619-246-5000).** Both shocks have Stig's magic shim stocks. One gives 8 inches of travel while the other gives 9 inches. The stock KLR650 shock gives approximately 7.5 inches of travel (Kawasaki counts the bump rubber as part of the travel). Member, Turf McTaggart has a bolt on from the Ohlins factory which require no special clevis washers or bottle-to-frame fitment. It can be purchased from Pettersson Pro Suspensions, part number KA1060.

My swing arms are modified for spring clearance and a shock shield has been installed to protect the shock from debris. A White Brothers chain wheel (small) has been installed in the air box to prevent chain slap from the longer travel suspension. I designed and C&J built an aluminum splash guard for under the rear fender to protect the tail light and wires.

Modifications have been made to the muffler to better improve breathing and sound (off-road use only). I've told subscribers Wayne Paxton and Ron Jensen about the mods and they are both pleased with the results. I've used Yuasa GRT YMF14L-2 batteries for half-a-dozen years now and love the service free feature. Some material must be removed from the bottom for that proper "strap-in-fit".

My seats are designed by me and built by Mike Brunton at **NBI Upholstery (619-223-8801).** They are flat and wide and have triple density foam. All day Baja rides are a piece of cake. My 70 year young wife, Pauline Read, has her own seat which attaches via Velcro to the rear of the main seat and overlaps the rear rack a bit. By the way, Pauline is easily the worlds greatest senior dirt bike co-pilot. She has ridden Ohpir, Cinnamon, Scofield and Engineer passes in southwest Colorado. She's also been two-up over most of Baja's roads, both good and bad. In all the sand and rocks, she's only walked two or three hundred meters and has never complained about the ride. Robert Buchanan and Ron Jensen, our KLR companions on most rides, will never know how much Pauline enjoys being accepted as one of the guys.

My Chase Harper enduro bags also Velcro to the seat under Pauline's pad and strap down to those great Drive Line Services side racks. There are a number of other modifications I've made to my KLR, mostly to prevent wear or improve serviceability. I've also had to redesign the balancer drive sprockets, but more on that later.

I've designed and both C&J and Eagle Manufacturing have helped me build some special tools to do difficult jobs like steering bearing and race removal, clutch removal and installation, mechanical seal installation, counter shaft seal driver and counter sprocket holder for 1996 and up. My next tool will simplify Unitrak and swingarm bearing lubrications (with the help of zirk fittings).

I'd love to head the design team for the ultimate big dual sport, but then so would we all. The best we can hope for is that the manufacturers someday listen to those who use what they produce. Maybe then they wouldn't make so many mistakes.

Elden Carl
5119 Verna Way
La Mesa, CA. 91941
619-440-2960 (6 to 7 a.m. best time to call. 5 p.m. also usually okay)

Editor's Note: *Along with his letter Elden supplied one of the most comprehensive "wish-lists" for the KLR650 which I feel obligated to publish for the benefit of those who also want to build a "Super KLR".*

1. Recall the optional kick starter kit which fits poorly and won't start the bike.
2. Recall all clutch baskets prior to 1996. I've found broken springs in two out of three 92's and 93's I've looked at and found pieces that have passed through the engine and entered the oil screen. High potential for catastrophic engine failure here.
3. Shorten the inner speedometer cable by 3mm or supply a 3mm spacer/seal that prevents damage to the speedometer.
4. Install a 1.85 front rim like the Suzuki DR650 and Tengai. The 1.60 rim on the KLR650 is not recommended for a 90/90 21 tire.
5. Move the oil sight glass up in the clutch cover as it gives a wrong reading in relationship to the 2.5 liter capacity of the crankcase.
6. Put proper size hole in left chain adjuster bracket so the rear axle will fit it properly
7. Use better material in the swing arm pivot /chain defensor.
8. Improve the fork boots so they last more than 18 months and don't cost $100.00 per set.
9. Lower the price of the counter balancer chain ($200.00 is a little much).
10. Put a detent in the ignition switch for "Park" position.
11. Lower the gas tank petcock so we aren't forced to carry .7 gallons of fuel we can't use.
12. Put a four bolt axle cap on the right fork leg so we can center the forks without shims.
13. Replace the KX80 front brake and disc with those from the Tengai.

(Continued on page 10)

.....Elden's Corner

(Continued from page 9)

14. Give us valve shims in .001" increments.
15. Make the seat wider, flatter and with triple density foam.
16. Redesign the balancer sprockets, like I did, to eliminate the frail spring and pin shcok absorber.
17. There are many other things I'd like improved like the fit an finish as it relates to the headlight bracket, shrouds and side covers. As for suggestions for a new and improved KLR650, a few suggestions would be…
18. Make the engine lighter and more powerful with less vibration but retain the steel support around the crank and the 48 ft/lbs of torque that hold the top-end together.
19. Better brakes and front fork with a true 9 inches of travel.
20. Adjustable rear shock with a heavier spring.
21. Shim and bucket valve adjustment with better shim selection and easier shim removal.
22. Beefed up frame and swing arm. Avoid perimeter frame unless fuel capacity and serviceability aren't compromised.
23. Wide flat seat.
24. Roomy ergonomics.
25. Make the bike as light and simple as possible.
26. Keep unsprung weight low.
27. Zirk fittings at all pivots and bearings.

Reader Feedback

Gino; Just finished reading the Sept./Oct. DSN which prompted me to write. First let me compliment you on an excellent newsletter. It contains more useful information in one issue than six of my BMWOA monthly magazines. Please include my name and address in your published list of subscribers.

Here's an important KLR650 technical tip for your subscribers. Although its pretty basic and not very technical, some of your readers are apparently unaware: To minimize vibration on any big single, but especially KLR 650's, it is very important to keep all motor mount bolts tight. I've owned two KL650 Tengai's and three KLR 650's and have found all of them capable of cruising in the 70 to 80 mph range with little vibration. In fact I think these motors are amongst the smoothest big singles out there. The key is to check and tighten the motor mounts on a regular basis, especially when new. On new bikes, I remove the two sets of triangular mounting plates and sand or file the paint off the frame where these plates come in contact to accelerate the wearing in process. I then reinstall and torque to the specified value. I've found that the motor mounts come inadequately tightened from the factory. (Note: It does little good to use thread locking compound because the loosening comes from the bedding in oftwo metal surfaces not from the nuts backing off. These plates are located in the front of the engine in plane view and under the gas tank. The other key is to periodically adjust the counter balancer chain tensioner since it's not an automatic one. These two maintenance items will result in a very smooth (for a big single) machine.

I recently purchased a 1997 DR650 Suzuki. I'm very happy with it. It addresses some of the KLR650 shortfalls. The brakes are vastly superior, the frame is much more rigid, and the suspension is much better. This results in a bike that offers better performance when the going gets rough. It's not as good as a road/touring bike as the KLR because of the narrow seat, lack of wind protection and less fuel capacity. And it's not as smooth as my KLR's have been. I changed the handlebars and installed aluminum "hand savers" which required the removal of the bar end weights. It made **a** noticeable difference in the amount of vibration felt through the hand grips at anything over 65 mph. This made me think that if a person is looking for the ultimate in smoothness from his KLR, it might be worth installing bar end weights in addition to the motor mount maintenance that I've already discussed.

A couple of other points worth mentioning as a result of lots of miles on KLR'S: 1) The cost of replacing the stock gas tank is over $400. and IMS makes a plastic one that's about $200. 2) The cost of replacing the single radiator is over $400. Both of these items are totally overpriced, especially when you consider that they've been in production for 10 years.

A comment about your KTM article. I've owned several KTM'S, most recently a 400 EXC. Owning a KTM can be a very unpleasant experience. They are maintenance intensive and parts prices are unbelievably high. Enough said!

Tim Zeirman
Minneapolis, MN.

Tim,

Thanks for the info. I have heard from several former KTM owners who echo your sentiments regarding the KTM Adventure.

******

Gino:Every issue just gets better and better! The tech tip on the safety switch bypass was rather long winded, but EVERYONE who rides a KLR off road needs to know how to bypass the clutch switch in case of damage to the clutch lever. The slightest hit and it's fumble to find

(Continued on page 11)

... Reader Feedback

(Continued from page 10)

neutral everytime! A big hit & you don't go anywhere!

There was a question about aftermarket levers for KLR. They are unique to the 650 & the 250. Flanders sells them cheaper than Kawasaki. Tengai are different from KLR, but I never looked to see if they can interchange with other Kawasaki stuff.

Please forward a message to Mr Coodington about the front end clunk. I went the Progressive spring route and found that a slight loosness in the head bearings became a clunk with Progressives. Get the bike up in the air, remove the fork legs and completely disassemble the stem & bearings and look for chipped rollers in the cone and roller. The bearings will take incredible abuse, but since you have it disassembled this far, check them and be sure. If new are required, bearing supply houses can cross reference the #s off the originals, and sell you new for a fraction of Kawasaki's price. Reassemble with waterproof grease, and tighten them quite tight. The spec seems too tight, but an imperceptible loosness can be felt on the road thru the bars.

Regards, Ed King

******

Gino, On page 12 of the SEP/OCT issue, you mentioned "premium road biased DP tires like the Michelin Sirac or TX66 radial." I would be interested to know if you, or any other K650DSOG members have any opinions, experience, or know of any test reports on other premium road biased DP tires, in particular, the Metzler Enduro 4, Pirelli MT60 and MT80 for the front, and Pirelli MT80 radial for the rear. The latter seems to be priced about 15% higher than the competition, and I wonder if it's 15% better? Also, does a radial have a shorter "tread to rim height" resulting in a lower seat height?"

Cordially, Jim

Jim,

I have not had any experience with the Perilli MT60 or MT80, but I do know that the Metzeler Enduro 4 tends to wear quickly just like its Enduro 3 brother. I also know that there is no discernable difference in seat height gained by going to a radial tire. As a matter of fact, I'm told by people "in-the-know" about tires, that going to radials on dual sports with relatively narrow rims like the KLR650 will only affect our check books and not much else. – Ed.

******

Dear Gino and Fellow Riders,

Finding the latest issue of *Dual Sport News* in the post office box is always a joyous occasion, even more so than receiving those more colorful publications I subscribe to. I devour every word, sometimes several times, then relish in the anticipation of the next arrival. I'd like to cover a few items of interest to fellow readers.

Returning from a dual sport ride in Arizona, in my van with the XR400 in tow (I like to ride the "challenging to difficult" routes, hence the Honda) I came upon a gent droning along the interstate on a heavily laden KLR650. I waved him down to offer him a ride into Albuquerque if he needed some relief. He refused and related his story to me.

He is from Australia, bought a used 1989 KLR650 and has thus far put 17,000 miles traveling in Bolivia and Peru, Canada and the United States. As he put it, "It never stopped once" meaning the KLR proved 100% reliable, except for one incident when a rock holed his cases which he managed to fix albeit a minor oil drip. Note to all; this is the third incident I've heard of where a KLR has had its cases broken by a rock. It seems prudent for anyone venturing off the highway at all, to invest in one of the aluminum skid plates available. I gave the young Aussie Gino's card and even though his trip was coming to an end, he was very interested to hear about the *KLR650 Dual Sport News* (*Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News).* I find his testimony very comforting when I'm off into the back country on my Kawasaki.

Further business. I've read at least two members mention installing bar snakes to help with the handle bar vibration. They do help as I used one some years back on a different motorcycle (a twin). BUT, as far as I know, they are no longer available. If anyone knows differently please let me know. An alternative method told to me by Andrew MacDonald of *Rider* magazine, is to use #9 birdshot! This in conjunction with bar end weights make a significant difference. Don't use the after market aluminum ones, they're useless. Get ones like, for example, from a Suzuki VX800, they are heavy. If you need advice on the non-bolt-on installation, call me. Also, I've

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 8)

Mike and Dianne have decided to close up shop and go travelling for a year or two (must be nice) and wanted to say thanks to all for ordering with them. They are going to do one more big run of fleece wear before the holidays, so if you want some custom made gear to layer under your jacket or pants, you'd better get your order in soon.

Big Paw Mountainworks, 281-1765.

Kawasaki Soft Luggage

Many of you have gone to your Kawasaki dealers and tried to order the new soft luggage only to be met by blank stares from the counter people. Well, rest assured that the luggage does indeed exist and here are some part numbers to give to the parts folks at your dealer.Tank bag part #K99994-500 Saddle bags part #K99994-499 Tail trunk part: K99995-501

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Reader Feedback

(Continued from page 11)

heard aluminum bars vibrate less but I've not tried them yet. You may wish to consider though, that most aluminum bars on the market feature a lower bend than stock. Another note to those troubled by vibration – "Go Faster!" I find those KLR's to be pretty smooth up around 75-80 mph and with a good seat and cruise control plus the right grips, it's practically a Cadillac! I'm looking forward to Gino's report on the Travelcade seats before I invest in one myself. Thanks Gino!

Gino could you please better explain engine balancer chain adjustment procedure as the manual states; "… loosen the nut and retighten the nut."

More stuff. Upgrade to 1996 and later KLR650s not mentioned in earlier issue on this subject. Brakes improved! I found out by accident by not being careful when ordering front brake pads for my '91 that the '96-on pads are much larger. Hey, just what everyone was asking for, we got and without a word from Kawasaki. Also, Gino, you forgot to mention the revised cams in your last article. I believe they now deliver better low and mid-range power.

Neutral safety switch disconnect: Reason #2 for doing so is simply the convenience of being able to restart after a stall, (what me stall?) especially on a rugged uphill trail, by merely pulling in the clutch, thumbing the start button and off you go. No more searching for neutral in some awkward position or even at a traffic light (how embarrassing).

KLR clutch levers are less than $15.00 with out 10% discount at R&S Kawasaki. It pays to bring along a spare on off-road adventures. Another alternative is to give up those good looking hand protectors for the type that wrap completely around and mount in the handle bar ends. Those afford good crash protection in addition to hand protection. How about showing a design for the right side prop stand. Does anyone even offer them?

I realize this is a long winded letter, but I've got one final point. Regarding the 16 tooth counter shaft sprockets. Didn't Jake Jakeman already have that? I feel that is unnecessarily tall gearing for the KLR650. But, in conjunction with a 2 tooth increase at the rear would be just about perfect for the highway. Then, a quick counter shaft sprocket change would give perfect gearing for dual sport rides.

I wish all *DSN* readers a good winter. Try not to get too bored if you have to put your motorcycles up for the winter. Here in New Mexico, we do get some clear sunny days inviting a nice mid-day cruise. So, happy trails caballeros.

Joel Wood
El Prado, NM

Joel,

It's always good to hear from you. I know I sort of promised everyone a review of the Travelcade seats, but I had way too much reader material to get into this issue. I was unaware of the '96-on brake upgrade as was just about everyone else. Guess there wasn't that much improvement. To adjust the engine balancer chain, loosen the nut about two turns and retighten. – Ed.

******

Gino,I love your newsletter. It has proven to be extremely helpful in sorting out my '96 KLR650. I do not like the way you constantly bash BMW motorcycles. Almost every issue has a dig

(Continued on page 16)

.....Updates

(Continued from page 11)

Look for a full report on the luggae in the next issue.

NEXT ISSUE:

Kawasaki soft luggage, seat options, Dual Star center stand evaluation, Suzuki DR650 evaluation

Final Notes:

Just got an e-mail from a gent selling bicycle carriers for dual sport bikes, including the KLR650. He even offers a surf board adapter (I could have used that in my California days!) If you are interested, give Mark Schuette a call at 541-383-3845 or write to:
Cycle By-Cycle Carriers
1440 1/2 NE 7th St.
Bend, Oregon 97701

ARROWHEAD MOTORSPORTS
Motorcycle Service, Parts, Accessories

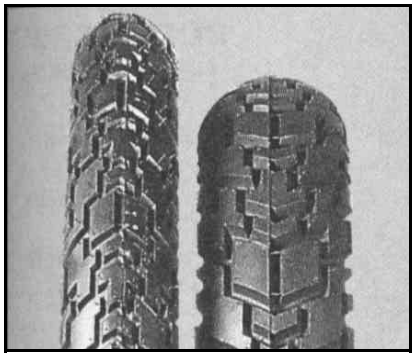
Fred Hink
801-259-7356

2970 Desert Rd.
Moab, Utah 84532

Dual Sport Alliance

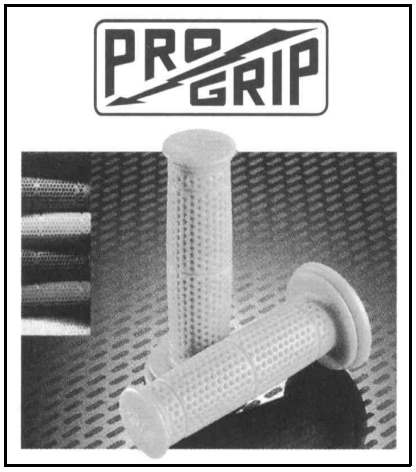
First Annual Accessory Guide

Okay, I know. Some of you were expecting to see a write-up on the Suzuki DR650 here. I had previously wanted to have the Accessory Guide in the main body of the *K650DSN*, but I got so many contributions that I had to move it to the *DSA* column. What we have here is a list of the most popular accessories that folks have recommended over the past year's worth of issues. Some pertain solely to the Kawasaki 650 dual sports and others can be used in the more generic sense. So highlight the goodies you want and leave this section where your honey can find it. Maybe this holiday season will bring you the accessory you've been wanting.



LEFT: **AVON AM24 Gripster** Easily the favorite of KLR riders for good on-road and off-road perfomance with a reasonable life span. Many riders report 10K miles out of the rear tire in mixed riding surfaces. Also one of the easiest tires I ever had to mount and balance. Be sure to order the tube-type when you buy.

PROGRESSIVE SUSPENSION Front Fork Springs Dollar for dollar, the best money you can spend on the front suspension of your KLR or Tengai. A cinch to install, these springs will firm up the front suspension and give you more cornering confidence and off-road stability. Avaliable through your local dealer or mail-order catalogue.



RIGHT: **Quality Engine R&D Lowering Links for KLR650** Neither Steve Kesselring nor I knew just how popular these would be nor how much they would inprove the handling of the KLR. Bolt these on and lower your KLR650 1.5 inches and realize just how much more flickable your bike becomes. **334-677-1708**

LEFT: **PRO GRIP Gel Grips** Another favorite of the group. These grips are on every bike I own and I have a few extras just in case. Vibration absorbing and a little thicker than stock. A bargain at under $8.00 and they come in a wide assortment of colors. Available from your dealer or mail order.

RIGHT: **MOOSE SKID PLATE** One our readers termed this to be the "Mother of all skid plates". The beefiest skid plate available for the KLR650. A little tricky to mount, but never has to come off as it has a hole to reach the oil drain plug. Will also work with the various center stands available for the KLR650. Available from your local dealer or mail order. Note that although the Moose skid plate is listed only for 1987-1995 KLR650 models, it will work just fine on 1996 to current models also.

... Accessory Guide

LEFT: **ACERBIS Rally Hand Guards** Widely used amongst dual sporters, these hand guards not only protect your hands, but also your control levers by virtue of also attaching at the end of the handle bar, forming a perimeter of protection. With the optional spoilers, they offer good cold weather protection. The are not compatible with the stock bars on the KLX and will not work with bar end weights. They are available from your local dealer or mail

RIGHT: **CLEARVIEW KLR650 Windscreen** While it may not be the most popular windscreen, it has received the most accolades and is available in more sizes and tints than its competitor, the Rifle wind screen. The Clearview uses five-point attachment and firms up the mini-fairing in the process. Available from Clearview, 800-798-6089.

LEFT: **KLR650/Tengai Center Stand** Without a doubt, the most sought after accessory for the KL650 series. I receive more e-mail, letters and phone calls for this gem than most other accessories combined. Three models are available:
Dual Star Heavy Duty available from Dual Star 206-776-7433.
Five Stars (pictured) from Ride West BMW 206-527-5511.
Rikki available from M&P 011-44-990-703030.
Remeber when ordering the Five Stars or Rikki stands to order for a '92 KLR650 regardless of year your bike is.

RIGHT: **DRIVE LINE SERVICES Side Racks** These are an absolute must if you use soft luggage. Made with very strong hydraulic line tubing and a minimum of welds, these side rack will support any amount of weight you wish to put into a soft saddlebag. They will also protect the side panels of your bike in off-road conditions. Made by enthusiasts for enthusiasts. These racks are avialble from Drive Line Services in Boise, Idaho only, 800-444-8770

.... Accessory Guide

LEFT: **KAWASAKI LUGGAGE for the KLR650** I'll be covering these in the next issue, but couldn't resist a little teaser. This is some of the best soft lugguage I've ever strapped to a bike and they work excellent with the side racks from Drive Line Services. Kawasaki offers a tank bag, tail trunk and saddle bags. See *UPDATES* for part numbers.

RIGHT: **SAENG/TA Dual Sport Lights** A new product from Saeng/TA that looks like it has potential. These lights clamp to your fork legs near the lower triple clamp and can adjust in an infinite number of directions. Very clever indeed. Available only from Saeng/TA, 800-868-7464.

Haves, Wants and Needs

WANTED: Stock windshield for KLR650. Call Bogdan Swider 719-389-6373 leave message.

FOR SALE: 1996 KTM 400EXC Enduro 4 stroke. ProTaper handlebars, rear rack, excellent condition, less than 100 miles. Call Bruce Kentner 505-892-0032.

FOR SALE: Stock 1995 KLR fork springs, 2.5K miles, $15.00 postage paid. Rick in Sal Lake City 801-484-3240 evening. No call back means sold.

FOR SALE: Five Stars engine guards for KLR650, good shape. $70.00
Rojo AirHawk fully adjustable air inflated seat cushion. Hardly used $80.00
Eclipse Sport bike saddlebags and matching duffel $30.00
IMS plastic tank for KLR650, white, a little beat up $40.00

SEASONS GREETINGS
from
Kawasaki 650
DUAL SPORT NEWS

.... Reader Feedback

(Continued from page 12)
against Beemers and it bothers me since I have two in my garage next to the KLR650. Please stop.

Writer wishes to remain anonymous.

Anonymous,
Point well taken. I'll try to watch my bias against BMW motorcycles, but it will be hard – Ed.

******

Gino, You printed a letter from me in the May/June issue, asking about windscreens. Since then I've tried a few and thought your readers might benefit from what I've learned. I agree with your "anti-windscreen" belief in the sense that the wrong shield can be worse than none at all.

Firstly, I'm 6'1" and ride a 1997 KLR650 mostly at highway speeds. I tried the taller Rifle replacement screen and found it noisy, narrow, too flexy and expensive. I couldn't get Clearview to answer their phone despite repeated attempts. Slipstreamer makes a couple of shields which looked promising but appear to mount only to a fork mounted, round headlight. J.C. Whitney sells a cheap ($50.00) and large (25" H, 16"-22" W) screen, but it only attached at two points with poor hardware which collapsed the first time I reached highway speeds.

The National Cycle Street Shield is clearly too small for my purposes, but they make an EX version which is 18" high (not 19 ½" as claimed) and wider (13" at the top and 19" at the widest). I can easily see over it , even when adjusted as high as possible. Good hardware attaches at four points for a sturdy installation. What I like about the Street Shield EX is that it can be mounted either with or without the stock screen. Without the stock screen, enough airflow gets under the EX to minimize any harsh wind-blast coming over the top edge, for a relatively quiet ride. With the stock screen left in place, a bit more noise is the price you pay for a still air pocket, probably a worthwhile trade-off in cold weather.

So here is a quality shield which fits the KLR well and, though not full-sized, helps reduce fatigue at highway speeds and improves touring in the cold weather which I love to do. However, if anyone knows of a large (21" high or taller) screen which will fit the KLR, I'd like to know.

I went through this trouble because I believe the KLR is a great platform upon which to build a touring bike. Where else can you get comfortable ergonomics, light weight, the potential for 50-60 mpg and 300 plus miles per tank, water cooling, decent torque and long travel suspension for less than $5,000.00. I'm adding a touring seat, larger rear rack and a throttle lock. For luggage, sticking with the theme of light weight and simplicity, I prefer my trusty large Army surplus duffel made waterproof with a spray such as CampDry (the military aspect seems to deter theft). So what you end up with is a perfectly adequate tourer which weighs and costs about half of what an ST1100 (Honda) does!

Also, a note about seats. One option is to modify the stock seat. I used Sargent Cycle (800-749-7328). They widened and leveled mine using denser foam, resulting in significantly improved comfort without the forward slope of the Corbin seat. Also, it appears more in harmony with the KLR than a touring bucket type seat. But they'll build however you like it, with dozens of options and colors. Request brochures, plan carefully and communicate clearly (ideally with a diagram) so you'll be happy with the result. They got it right the first time for under $200.00. Total time (including shipping) was only 10 days.

Steven Malek
New Orleans, LA
504-522-1124

Steve,
Thanks for the info on windscreens and seats. Supplemental windscreens tend to be the most popular with the KLR group of riders. Many leave their stock screens on when mounting the supplemental screen. Then, when they are going off-road riding, they remove the secondary screen and have the stock screen available.

The seat info is also very helpful. I have had several seats worked on by Sargent Cycle and have had good results except for the one they did for my KLR. I'll be covering Sargent, Corbin, and Travelcade seats in the next issue .